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CORRESPONDENCE

GUILT BY INNUENDO

To the editors:

In his article "The Salvador Strategy" (October 7), Raymond Bonner falsely charges that the Asian-American Free Labor Institute "has historic links to the CIA." Such accusations resurrect ancient, unproved, and unfounded espionage charges about other people and other organizations in *other* parts of the world, concerning events of nearly 20 years ago—before AAFLI existed. Such irresponsible attempts to cobble together linkages where none exist, to create guilt by innuendo, threaten the safety of our representatives and their families.

As for Mr. Bonner's comment that AAFLI is "ostensibly" an arm of the AFL-CIO: since 1968 AAFLI has been an integral part of the AFL-CIO's foreign affairs and assistance program. AAFLI's president is AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland. Its trustees are all members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council. AAFLI's programs are formulated under the policy directives of the AFL-CIO and implemented under the guidance of AFL-CIO officers.

AAFLI does receive funding from both the Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy, but this relationship in no way makes the AFL-CIO an agent of the United States government. Any serious look at the AFL-CIO foreign policy over the years shows a large number of profound disagreements with U.S. policy. Nor is there anything secretive about the way AAFLI receives its funding or how it is spent.

AFL-CIO policy in the Philippines rests on the firm belief that free-trade unionists and their agrarian counterparts are the essential building blocks of the democratic center. AAFLI implements that policy through its support of traditional labor education activities, as well as innovative membership services programs designed to meet the needs of workers and their organizations.

It should go without saying that, contrary to Bonner's clear implication, AAFLI is *not* "a conduit for U.S. funds to the [Philippine] elections." True, our efforts aid the building of democratic institutions, but we are in no way a kind of political action committee for any election campaign in the Philippines or anywhere else.

CHARLES D. GRAY
Executive Director
Asian-American Free Labor Institute
Washington, D.C.

Raymond Bonner replies:

Confirmation of the historic connection between AAFLI and the CIA is provided by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Jonathan Kwitny in his book *Endless Enemies*. Kwitny notes that one of the principals in AAFLI in Vietnam in the late 1960s was Irving Brown. Although Brown has denied any CIA connections, former CIA officer John Stockwell told Kwitny that "Irving Brown was 'Mr. CIA' in the labor movement." Another former CIA officer, Paul Sakwa, says that he "served as Brown's case officer, or control, in the CIA for several years," according to Kwitny. Finally, Kwitny writes, "Former CIA officer Thomas W. Braden says that he personally delivered $15,000 in CIA cash to Brown," and that Brown used a pseudonym "for undercover work while serving under his own name as AFL-CIO representative in Europe."

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